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## On the Hill



### Bode Testifies on Infant Mortality

On April 25, Assistant Secretary John W. Bode testified before the National Commission to Prevent Infant Mortality. The hearing, chaired by Senator Lawton Chiles (D-FL), focused on the Federal government's role in preventing infant mortality.

Bode's main points included the following:

- o An important part of the Federal government's national effort to reduce the incidence of low birthweight by promoting an improved nutritional status of pregnant women is the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC);

- o Currently WIC serves 72 percent of all pregnant women at the highest risk below poverty group and 88 percent of the infants in the highest risk below poverty group;

- o Standing alone, however, the WIC program cannot substitute for adequate prenatal care, but WIC program efforts to introduce participants into a health care network augment the availability of prenatal care;

- o USDA, through the WIC program, has undertaken and implemented strategies to coordinate our efforts with Medicaid; the Maternal and Child Health Program; the Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition; and other such groups at the Federal, regional, state, and local levels;

(Infant Mortality Continued Page 2)

### OPM Offers Another Retirement Opportunity

Federal employees who were unable to transfer from the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) to the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) during the 6-month transfer period that ended December 31, may get another chance.

Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has authorized agencies to accept transfers to FERS from employees who were unable to switch by December 31 due to conditions beyond their control. For example, transfers will be accepted from employees who were not notified or were not aware of last-minute congressional changes in the FERS law. The decision to transfer must be made by June 30—once made it is irrevocable.

(OPM Continued Page 6)

### USDA Celebrates Asian Pacific American Heritage Week

In recognition of Asian Pacific American Heritage Week (May 7-14), USDA joined other Federal agencies and departments throughout the Nation with a special ceremony on May 12 at the Administration Building patio. The theme was "Decade of Achievements."

The special observance featured Irene Natividad as keynote speaker. Natividad, a political activist and an educator, is also chair of the National Women's Political Caucus. Elected in 1985 and re-elected in 1987, Natividad has led the 77,000-member, grassroots group for the past two years.

(Heritage Continued Page 4)



- o At USDA, improved targeting of high-risk participants is an ongoing program goal. USDA is currently conducting a study to assist state agencies in their targeting efforts;

- o With respect to funding, WIC already receives enough funding to serve all of the pregnant women and infants with a medically based nutritional risk; and

- o Two other programs administered by USDA that assist in reducing low birthweight babies are the Commodity Supplemental Food Program and the Food Stamp Program.

Other witnesses included elected Federal/state legislators, Federal/state agency officials, and representatives from school and health clinics.

## House Marks Up AFDC Moratorium

During an April 26 mark-up session, the House Ways and Means Committee, Subcommittee on Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation, chaired by Rep. Tom Downey (D-NY), voted 5 to 1 to forward to the full committee a document containing an Aid to Families With Dependent Children Quality Control (QC) provision extending the moratorium on the collection of QC disallowances for 1 year. The one opposing vote was Rep. Bill Frenzel (R-MN).

Under the provision, states would continue to operate QC systems and to

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The Friday Letter is published every 2 weeks by the Public Information Staff of the Food and Nutrition Service. To update mailing address, or to alter number of copies received, please mail changes to the FNS Public Information Staff, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 823, Alexandria, VA 22302, telephone no. 756-3284.

calculate the error rates. The Grant Appeals Board would continue to collect error rate data and to review state waiver requests. Also, the Department of Health and Human Services would be required to submit its recommendations for improving the QC system by February 15, 1989. The provision would take effect on July 1, 1988. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the provision has no budgetary impact.

Rep. Frenzel offered an amendment, sponsored by Rep. Hank Brown (R-CO). Their amendment proposed that, while the 1-year extension of the moratorium may be necessary to make the system operate effectively, those states that have errors of twice the amount originally established by Congress should begin paying back their disallowances immediately upon enactment of the provision. Congress estimated its provision would affect about one quarter of the states.

Rep. Robert Matsui (D-CA) and Rep. Downey were the most vocal in their criticism of the amendment. Both agreed that penalties cannot be based, however loosely, on an invalid error rate formula. The Brown Amendment was voted down, 2 to 5.

It is not certain at this time whether a bill containing the moratorium extension provision will be introduced at the full committee or the subcommittee level.

## House Agrees to Amend National School Lunch Act

On April 28, the House Education and Labor Committee, chaired by Rep. Augustus Hawkins (D-CA), marked up H.R. 4306, a bill to amend the National School Lunch Act to require eligibility for free lunches to be based on the nonfarm income poverty guidelines prescribed by the Office of Management and Budget.

The full committee voted, without objection, to report the bill. The following amendments were offered and agreed to:



## MARO Officials Visit Delaware E&T Program Site

Regional Administrator Chris Martin and Food Stamp Program Director Ralph Picone were recently the guests of Delaware Secretary of Health and Social Services Thomas Eichler during a tour of West End Neighborhood House, "The First Step" Employment and Training (E&T) Program site in Wilmington, Delaware.

Services provided at the West End Neighborhood House have changed since its staff taught immigrants about American culture more than 100 years ago. But the focus at the former settlement house has remained the same--to serve people in Wilmington.

Today, the staff at West End is teaching food stamp and welfare recipients to write resumes, to fill out job applications, to raise their basic skills levels, and to decrease their dependency on assistance programs.

Delaware state agency case managers interview food stamp and welfare recipients required to enroll in the E&T Program mandated nationwide by P.L. 99-198. Together, they design an individualized training plan based on a participant's academic level and skills. Those with good job-search skills are receiving vocational training in such areas as nursing, retail management, food service, and data entry.

Martin, Picone, and Eichler observed math classes and sessions where participants were learning job-search techniques such as handling competition, using body language effectively, dressing properly, and asking for a particular salary.

Several participants in "The First Step," which began in April 1987, told MARO staff they did not at first like being forced to participate in the program but are now very happy with it because it's leading them in new directions.

Department of Health and Social Services staff said approximately 600 recipients

will be employed by the end of the fiscal year.



Juanita Rios (left) ponders a question raised by a "First Step" program participant as Thomas Eichler, secretary of the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (center), and Chris Martin, MARO administrator, observe the session on job search techniques.

-Story and photo by Marian Wig  
MARO Public Affairs Staff

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## Dower Achieves Toastmasters Top Status

WRO's Alan Dower earned top honors in Toastmasters, the international speech organization, by being named a Distinguished Toastmaster--something less than 1 percent of the club's members accomplish.



(Dower Continued Page 4)

To become a Distinguished Toastmaster, Dower, a state desk manager in the Food Stamp Program Quality Control Unit, completed a number of requirements as a member of the USDA Whole Wheat Toastmasters club based in WRO. These included: 4 years continuous Toastmasters club membership; earning Able Toastmasters and Certified Toastmasters certificates through leadership and speaking achievements; conducting an 8-hour public speaking course for non-Toastmasters; giving five speeches before non-Toastmasters groups; serving as a Whole Wheat Toastmasters club officer and district officer; being a mentor for two new clubs; and sponsoring five new club members. Dower also coordinated a program in which troubled teens researched topics and gave speeches at the Hillcrest Juvenile Center in the Bay Area.

Dower has also been voted the club's Outstanding Area Governor, Outstanding Lieutenant Governor, and twice Toastmaster of the Year for a cluster of Toastmasters groups in downtown San Francisco. Dower was the first president for the Whole Wheat Toastmasters, an 18-member club formed in 1983.

"I never really thought I'd pursue it (Toastmasters) that far," said Dower. "Some people helped me along the way, and I found opportunities to do the same. I get a lot more out of Toastmasters than I put into it."

-Story and Photos by Lois Grunwald  
WRO Public Affairs Staff

**TAKE  
PRIDE IN  
AMERICA**

o Rep. Chester Atkins (D-MA) proposed a \$2 million Farmers' Market Demonstration Project. This project would allow nutritionally at-risk individuals to purchase fresh produce.

o Rep. William Goodling (R-PA) offered a CASH/CLOC amendment authorizing payment of claims to school districts participating in the CASH/CLOC demonstration project. The claims resulted from a change in bonus assistance during school year 1982-83.

Also, Rep. James Jeffords (R-VT) offered report language on WIC home delivery. His language directs USDA to work with states to develop flexible accountability guidelines.

The House passed the bill, under suspension of the rules, on May 10.

The Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee reported the companion bill, S.2156, on April 20, without the amendments or report language. No date has been set for consideration by the Senate.

-Story by Catherine Whitehurst  
Governmental Affairs Staff

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(Heritage Continued From Page 1)

A native of the Philippines, Natividad has been the recipient of many honors and awards, including the 1986 Honored American Award, and is named in the American and International Who's Who of Political Women.

Included in the program were Taiwanese folk dancers and Japanese koto and flute musicians.

The special ceremony marked an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of Asian and Pacific Americans, as well as their significant contributions to the creation of a pluralistic America.

-Story by Angela Hooten  
Civil Rights and EEO Division



## NERO Sponsors Processing Conference

NERO's Food Distribution Program staff recently sponsored a meat and poultry processing conference at the regional office for all Northeast states.

The 2-day agenda, coordinated by Sandra Eller, NERO Food Distribution, included presentations on meat and poultry processing by the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) and the Agricultural Marketing Service's (AMS) Poultry Grading and Meat Grading and Certification Branches. A discussion of proposed regulation changes and the future of the National Commodity Processing Program was headed by Jan Wollam, Food Distribution Division. Each state distributing agency presented a specific general processing issue for discussion.

On the last meeting day, a tour of Boston's Kayem Foods, Inc. was arranged. Processing methods used to convert USDA-donated meat to other food products were demonstrated, and participants taste-tested some processed USDA commodities.



NERO Regional Administrator Harry McLean speaks with a worker at the Kayem Foods plant.

The meeting afforded states the opportunity to understand responsibilities and interactions among FNS, FSIS, and AMS in monitoring and processing of meat and poultry.



A Kayem Foods, Inc. manager (left) explains the processing procedure for USDA hot dogs to NERO Regional Administrator Harry McLean and Lou-Ann Klose (right) of the New Hampshire state distributing agency. Kayem processes hot dogs, bologna, and salami under contract for New Hampshire.



NERO Regional Administrator Harold McLean (left) discusses the hot issue of the day, TEFAP in New York State, with John McEvoy (center) of the New York Office of General Services, and John Magnarelli, NERO Special Nutrition Programs director.

-Story and Photos by  
NERO Public Affairs Staff

Other points about the transfer:

Effective Date - The transfer will not be retroactive to December 31, 1987. The election form will be processed and made effective as of the beginning of the pay period after it is received by the employment office.

Public Pension Offset - The Social Security Administration will treat the belated transfer as if it were filed on or before December 31, 1987. These transfer employees will be immediately exempted from the Public Pension Offset.

Eligible Employees - This opportunity only applies to employees who had a transfer decision to make between July 1 and December 31, 1987.

Election Form - OPM Form 1555 must be received by the employment office on or before June 30, 1988. The election form can be obtained from your employment office.

Employees should contact their employment office if they have any questions regarding the difference between CSRS and FERS.

-Story by Edna Alford  
Personnel Division

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## Civil Rights Training Organized

Mountain Plains Civil Rights/EEO Director Evelyn Stafford has begun a program of training for state agencies and regional program staff. With assistance from secretary Lynne Longfield, she put together a civil rights handbook of pertinent regulations and instructions.

Stafford will spend about 3 hours with each program's staff discussing civil rights compliance.

She plans to visit every state agency in the Mountain Plains Region to conduct civil rights reviews and provide technical assistance to insure that agency personnel are familiar with

the FNS civil rights compliance program in relation to food programs administered through the agencies.

The FNS Fiscal Year 1987-88 objective is to streamline the processing of civil rights complaints to be more responsive to the public. Civil rights directors and field offices across the country did such a good job in a 1-year civil rights pilot project that USDA has given FNS permission to continue investigating civil rights complaints.

-Story by Joanne Widner  
MPRO Public Affairs Staff

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## MARO Staff Learns Facts on AIDS

By the year 1991, a new case of AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) will be diagnosed every three hours in New Jersey alone. This represents a huge drain on the population and one of the reasons that MARO invited Patricia Nisler of the New Jersey Department of Health, AIDS prevention program, to discuss this epidemic.

Nisler was invited to speak to MARO employees as part of a series of training sessions on health-related issues.

She explained that for every one case of AIDS there are 10 cases of AIDS related complex (ARC) and 50 cases which show no symptoms of the infection.

She stressed that the AIDS virus is NOT transmitted by: breathing the same air, casual physical contact, silverware, saliva, tears, mosquitoes, donating blood, perspiration or environmental surfaces we share, like telephones, typewriters, and toilet seats.

Nisler stressed the importance of passing AIDS information on to children. She said the two most important messages to teach even small children are not to touch blood and never to pick up needles of any kind.

-Story by Linda Feldman  
MARO Public Affairs Staff



## Food Programs Participation Update

Following are preliminary estimates of participation in the Federal-State food assistance programs for the month of February with comparisons to the previous month and to the same month of last year.

	<u>Feb. 1987</u>	<u>Jan. 1988</u>	<u>Feb. 1988</u> <u>2/</u>
<u>Food Stamp Program: 1/</u>			
People participating (mil.) .....	19.4	18.7	19.0
Value of bonus coupons (\$ mil.) .....	899.9	933.7	948.5
Average bonus per person .....	\$ 46.45	\$ 49.81	\$ 50.03
Total program cost (\$ mil.) .....	995.2	1,035.3	1,050.1
<u>National School Lunch Program:</u>			
Number of schools participating (thous.) .....	90.2	90.6	90.6
Children participating (mil.) .....	24.0	24.4	24.3
Children reached with free or reduced price lunches (mil.) .....	11.8	11.5	11.6
Percentage of lunches served free .....	42.4	40.6	41.1
Percentage of lunches served at reduced price. ....	6.8	6.7	6.7
Total program cost (\$ mil.) .....	341.7	332.3	365.1
<u>School Breakfast Program:</u>			
Number of schools participating (thous.) .....	37.4	38.7	38.7
Children participating (mil.) .....	3.6	3.6	3.7
Percentage of breakfasts served free or at reduced price .....	88.5	87.9	87.4
Total program cost (\$ mil.) .....	47.0	44.5	51.0
<u>Child Care Food Program:</u>			
Number of meals served in centers (mil.) .....	36.3	34.3	38.8
Number of meals served in homes (mil.) .....	24.3	26.9	29.5
Percentage of all meals served free .....	78.0	78.4	78.6
Total program cost (\$ mil.) .....	44.8	46.6	51.8
<u>Special Supplemental Food Program (WIC):</u>			
People participating (mil.) .....	3.4	3.5	3.5
Food cost (\$ mil.) .....	110.7	117.0	118.1
Total program cost (\$ mil.) .....	135.1	146.2	147.7
<u>Commodity Supplemental Food Program: 3/</u>			
People participating (thous.) .....	184.4	212.8	213.3
Total program cost (\$ mil.) .....	3.1	3.2	3.2
<u>Food Distribution to Indians and Needy Families:</u>			
Number of projects in operation .....	106	106	106
People participating (thous.) .....	150.0	140.9	141.1
Total program cost (\$ mil.) .....	4.4	4.3	4.4
<u>Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program:</u>			
Total USDA cost (\$ mil.) .....	69.9	66.1	65.3

1/ Puerto Rico has been excluded from all months.

2/ Data collected as of April 25, 1988.

3/ Includes data for all elderly participants.

## Job Opportunities

FNS is seeking to fill the vacant positions listed below. To be considered for one of them, submit an up-to-date SF-171, Application for Federal Employment, and current performance appraisal to the appropriate personnel office. If you are interested in a headquarters position, apply to the Operations Branch, Personnel Division, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Alexandria, Virginia

22302. Apply directly to headquarters office for all GM-14 and 15 positions. For regional positions, apply directly to the regional office. For details on the requirements for any of the positions listed below, consult the official vacancy announcement. These are posted on designated bulletin boards or copies can be obtained from the appropriate regional or headquarters personnel office.

### Friday Letter Vacancy Listing By Vacancy Number

JOB TITLE	AREA OF CONSID.	SERIES	GRADE	CLOSING DATE	VACANCY NUMBER	OFFICE LOCATION
o Clerk Stay in Schooler	(A)	GW-303	1/2	Open	88-SIS	FNS
o Clerk Typist	(A)	GS-322	2/3/4	Open until Filled	NONE	FNS
o Secretary Typing	(A)	GS-318	4/5/6	Open Continuous	88-999	FNS
o Program Analyst	(A)	GS-345	7	5/31/88	88-31	OAE
o Program Analyst	(A)	GS-345	12/13	5/16/88	88-32	OAE
o Food Program Spec	(G)	GS-120	7	5/16/88	88-33	DASN
o Secretary Typing	(G)	GS-318	5/6	5/16/88	88-34	ORO
o Sup. Prog Analyst	(FNW)	GM-345	14	5/16/88	88-35	OAE
o Management Asst	(G)	GS-344	6/7	5/16/88	88-H-9	HNIS
o Food Program Spec	(FNW)	GS-120	7/9	5/23/88	88-36	SNP
o Food Program Spec	(G)	GS-120	7/9	5/23/88	88-36A	SNP
o Food Prog Spec	(FNW)	GM-120	13	6/6/88	88-37	FDD

#### Office Location

FNS	- Food and Nutrition Service
ORO	- Office of Regional Operations
OAE	- Office of Analysis and Evaluation
HNIS	- Human Nutrition Information Service
DASN	- Deputy Administrator for Special Nutrition Service
SNP	- Special Nutrition Program
FDD	- Food Distribution Division

#### Area of Consideration

(A)	- All Sources
(FNW)	- FNS Nationwide
(G)	- Governmentwide